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Historical News

By THE INDIANA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

The third annual history conference, under the auspices of the society of Indiana Pioneers, the Indiana Historical society, and the Historical commission, was held on December 9th and 10th, 1921, in the Claypool hotel. This conference on Indiana history which is rapidly taking on the nature of a clearing house for state history, was attended this year by more than two hundred people—the actual registration showed one hundred and seventy. Forty-six counties in the state were represented. From the standpoint of interest and attendance, the conference was by far the most successful of the three that have been held.

The Friday afternoon program was given over chiefly to a discussion of county centennial plans. Those participating in the discussion included Prof. Harlow Lindley, Lucy M. Elliott, Herriott C. Palmer, Mrs. H. C. Robinson, Clarence H. Smith, Miles S. Cox and Eliza G. Browning.

At the Friday evening session ex-Governor Samuel M. Ralston read an interesting paper on Jonathan Jennings, the First Governor of Indiana.

At the Saturday forenoon session, the following papers were read: The Local Library—A Center for Historical Material, by William J. Hamilton, secretary Indiana Public Library commission; Kinds of Material to be Preserved for Historical Purposes, by Esther U. McNitt; The Value and Importance of Historical Markers, by Colonel Robert L. Moorhead, and The Writing of Family Histories, by Edgar T. Forsyth.

At the Saturday afternoon session the following papers were read: Indiana's Part in General Butler's Expedition to New Orleans, by Rufus Dooley, Rockville; Local Pioneer History as Seen Through Local Pioneer Laws, by George R. Wilson; The Possibilities of Historical Pilgrimages: (1) The Society of Indiana Pioneers, by Amos W. Butler; (2) Local Organizations, by Ben F. Stuart, Burnetts Creek, and Creole Customs in Old Vincennes, by Miss Anna C. O'Flynn, Vincennes.

The annual dinner of the society of Indiana Pioneers was held on Saturday evening. A talk on Some Old-Fashioned Indiana Writers, by Mrs. Demarchus C. Brown, and the singing of the songs of days long gone, were the chief features of the pioneer dinner program.

A committee was appointed to arrange for the Fourth annual conference on December 10th and 11th, 1922. These annual conferences on Indiana history are becoming a feature in promoting a keener interest in our state's history. They bring together the four leading organizations in Indiana that are primarily interested in state history, namely, society of Indiana Pioneers, Indiana historical society, Indiana historical commission, and the history teachers section of the Indiana State Teacher's association.

The Henry County historical society has the distinction of being the first local historical society in the state to take advantage of the special act approved March 10, 1921, enabling the board of county commissioners to employ a curator to look after the work of the local historical society. Clarence H. Smith of Newcastle has been named as its curator. Mr. Smith has entered upon his work and is devoting his time now to classifying the collection of books, papers and relics that are in the possession of the society.

The growing interest on the part of the reading public in Indiana history is strikingly illustrated by the space now devoted to this subject by the leading newspapers of the state. For several months, Kate Milner Rabb, through her daily column in the Indianapolis *Star* under the caption, The Hoosier Listening Post has done much toward arousing a greater interest in the study of pioneer history, and in the preservation of old time songs, stories and historical incidents that meant so much in the early life of the state. Down in the southwestern part of the state, the weekly appearance of the Pocket Periscope in the Evansville *Courier*, edited by Thomas James de la Hunt, has enlisted a large school of historical students and readers in the study of southern Indiana and Ohio river history. Up in the northeastern part of the state, frequent articles contributed by B. J. Griswold of Fort Wayne, in the Fort Wayne *Journal-Gazette*, find a large number of readers. The most

recent contributor in the school of historical news writers, is George S. Cottman. Since early in November, 1921, Mr. Cottman has been contributing weekly articles to the Indianapolis *News* under the caption Bits from Indiana History. No person in the state is better qualified to ferret out and relate early historical incidents.

The annual election of the Allen County historical society, held November 6, 1921, resulted in the election of Bert J. Griswold as president; Ross L. Lockridge, vice-president; Mrs. J. B. Crankshaw, secretary and treasurer. Page W. Yarnelle, Mrs. A. J. Detzer, Dr. Charles R. Dryer, and Jacob M. Stouder were elected to membership on the board of directors. At the annual meeting a program consisting of historical papers and readings was given as follows: Happy Kekiongo, Mrs. Arthur Twining; The French and British Struggle, Luther Meyer; Fort Wayne and the Revolution, Mrs. H. A. Thomas; Little Turtle, Robert P. Cordiner; Mad Anthony Wayne, J. H. Chap- pel, and The Wabash-Erie Canal, G. H. Russell.

The history of Hancock county in the World war, compiled by George J. Richman of Greenfield, together with a manuscript history of Clinton county in the World war, have recently been filed with the collection of State war records now being compiled by the Indiana historical commission. The Hancock county history is the first war history to be published under the provisions of an act passed during the 1921 session of the state legislature.

A paper on the railroad wreck of October 31, 1864, by Alva O. Reser, of Lafayette, was recently prepared and filed in the Indiana State library. This disaster, the worst of its kind that had occurred in the railroad history of the United States up to that date, attracted nation wide attention, due to the fact that the train was carrying Union soldiers from Iowa and Illinois, who were going home on a furlough, many of them to vote in the elections of 1864. Thirty men were killed outright. The wreck occurred about eight miles east of Lafayette.

The oldest church in Orange county and perhaps the oldest building in the county, a landmark cherished through the passing century, will soon take its place in the records of the past, as this historic edifice,

formerly the property of the Society of Friends, and known as the Lick creek meeting house, has been sold and is now being torn down.

This house of worship, the first Protestant church in this part of the country, was built early in 1813. In the latter part of the year 1812, a group of Quaker pioneers came here from North Carolina. Legends have been handed down telling of the devotion of these settlers to their religious beliefs, and recording that the log meeting house was completed before any of the homes were erected. The Friends lived in their "schooners" or in rude shelters until the church building was completed. * * *

The history of the church is inseparably entwined with the history of the county. It was this group of settlers who came from Orange county, Carolina, who gave to the county its name. Also, to one of the leaders of these Quaker pioneers, Jonathan Lindley, who was appointed first county agent, belongs the honor of laying out and naming the county seat, Paoli. This was done in 1816.

A number of widely known women preachers among the Quakers of early days came from this congregation. Among them was Amy Moore, who was known throughout southern Indiana for her missionary zeal. Another woman, praised for her evangelistic work in early times, was Eleanor Chambers, who grew up in this church and began her work here.

Famous underground stations during Civil war days also were found in this community, and many fugitive slaves found their way in safety to the north through the efforts of the Lick creek Quakers.

—*Indianapolis News*, January 20, 1922.

November 12, 1921, the Orange County historical society was organized in Paoli. The following officers were elected: Alfred W. Bruner, Paoli, president; L. C. Ralston, Orleans, vice-president; Anna Maris, Paoli, secretary, and Will Cave, French Lick, treasurer. The first regular meeting of the society was held in the courthouse, Paoli, November 19, at which meeting a constitution was adopted, and forty-four charter members were voted into the society. Papers and talks were given by Miss Jennie Throop, Miss Mary Shirley, Senator Oscar Ratts, Wilbur Brooks, J. A. McCoy, Aaron Maris, Miss Ferguson and Jesse M. Trinkle on various subjects pertaining to Orange county's history. The next regular meeting of the society was held February 2, 1922, the 106th anniversary of the organization of Orange county. To the credit of Orange county it is the first of the county historical societies to observe the clause in their constitution which provides for filing duplicates of all papers read at their regular meetings with

the Indiana historical commission. Already the historical commission has received a copy of two valuable papers read at the February meeting. The first of these is by the president, Alfred W. Bruner, on Early Trails and Indian Treaties, while the second is by Jesse Trinkle, entitled A Brief History of Public Buildings of Orange County, as shown by the records of the Board of County Commissioners of Orange County, 1816-1916. If the other local societies in the state would follow the precedent set by the Orange county society, there can be collected in one central place,—the Indiana state library,—a priceless collection of papers on local history such as has never yet been assembled in the state.

The Washington County historical society seems to be showing greater signs of activity than any other local society in the state. Under the leadership of Mrs. Harvey Morris, its president, the society has been reorganized under the township plan, a chairman being selected for each township. As an indication of the success of this plan, P. H. Gill, chairman of Polk township, reported at the November and December meetings of the society, one hundred and six new members together with a collection of numerous and valuable old relics. Other townships were represented at the December meeting by the different chairmen of each and reported many new accessions to the society, as well as many contributions to its museum. This society has its home in the courthouse at Salem, and has already in its collection many articles of historical value.

In the organization of the Randolph County historical society much credit will have to be given to O. H. Greist, superintendent of schools of that county. At the Randolph county teachers institute held on Saturday, November 5, a representative of the Indiana historical commission was present and urged the organization of a local society in Randolph county. As a result of the appeal, a permanent organization was formed with Philip Kabel as president; O. H. Greist, vice-president; and Judge A. L. Bales, secretary and treasurer. Plans for a further organization will be perfected by Mr. Kabel which means success for the work of this society in the future.

Many important events have taken place in the old capitol building at Corydon since its erection in 1811. On Saturday, Nov. 19, in response to a call sent out by the newspapers, a representative number of people gathered beneath the roof of the old state house for the purpose of organizing a local historical society. Lucy M. Elliott, representing the Indiana historical commission, was present and urged the necessity of such an organization in Harrison county. An organization was perfected with 55 charter members and the following officers were elected for the year 1922: Miss Jennie Griffin, president; Lew M. O'Bannon, vice president; Thomas J. Wilson, secretary; and George Reuter, treasurer. A program committee was appointed to outline plans for the work of the society during the year 1922.

To Jasper county belongs the credit of organizing the first local historical society in Indiana in 1922. January 10 a meeting was held at the home of Mrs. John I. Gwin, of Rensselaer. A representative of the historical commission had been invited to be present and explain the necessity of such an organization, and the plans of the state for cooperation with local societies. The following officers were elected: C. R. Dean, city superintendent of schools, president; Mrs. Charles W. Hanley, vice president; L. H. Hamilton, secretary; and Mrs. Mary E. Drake, treasurer. Various other committees were appointed, and plans made for the compilation of the Jasper county war history.

The month of December, 1921, recorded the organization of the Crawford county historical society at English. The following persons were elected to office: H. H. Pleasant, president; Arthur H. Flanigan, vice president; Miss Lou Thornbury, secretary and treasurer. Mr. Pleasant is county superintendent of schools, and is writing a history of Crawford county that will soon be published in book form. This history will contain also a history of the World war activities in Crawford county. One of the immediate projects of the society, is the purchase of five acres of ground near English, on which is located the monument in honor of William H. English, for a city park. With two such undertakings in

mind, it can be safely said that Crawford county has work ahead of it.

November 19, 1921, a committee composed of members of the Indiana historical society, called a meeting and organized a Carroll county historical society. John C. Odell, local historian, was chosen chairman. The first regular meeting of the society was held on Saturday, December 31, 1921, at the public library in Delphi. A representative of the historical commission was present and outlined the plans of the state for the year 1922. According to the constitution of the society, the annual election of officers takes place on December 31, and the following officers were elected: William C. Smith, president; John C. Odell, vice president; Mrs. Charles Buckley, secretary and treasurer; directors, Ben F. Stuart, Mrs. W. A. Breining, Mrs. Henry Wilson, William Gros, and Mrs. Thaddeus Guthrie; committee on township history, Mrs. Charles Buckley, Mrs. N. W. Bowen and Ben F. Stuart; committee on membership, Mrs. W. H. Robinson, Mrs. Mae Sibbitt and Mrs. Harry Arnold. The second regular meeting of the society was held January 21. The following program consisting of ten minute talks was given: The Beginning of Commercialism in Carroll County, Ben F. Stuart; The Best Way to Obtain the Early History of Carroll County, Charles Buckley; Who Were the Most Noted Pioneer Men and Women of Carroll County, M. Sterling and John C. Odell; The Indian Reservations in Carroll County, Date of Grant and Location, Amount of Land, and Their Passing of Title with Consent of Government, Harry Arnold.

Armistice day, November 11, 1921, was generally celebrated throughout the state of Indiana by programs, patriotic and social in nature. No more beautiful or appropriate program was given in the state than the celebration of this event in Evansville. The program consisted first of a parade in which marched the soldiers of three wars, the Service Star legion, Labor Union members, civic organizations, and representatives of every walk of life, the number of marchers estimated from 5,000 to 7,000; and a pageant immediately following the parade given in the Coliseum. Mrs. Albion Fellows Bacon was the author of the pageant, and Mrs. E. A. Torrance,

the director. The subject of the pageant was Disarmament, and was written for the express purpose of showing the horrors of war and the blessings of peace. The theme of the first act was war, accompanied by the attending spirits of death and famine; and the theme of the second act peace, enthroned on the earth surrounded by smiling nations and happy flower-laden children. The concluding song, Peace to the Nations, emphasized the central theme of the pageant, Disarmament of Nations to insure permanent peace. It was an all Evansville pageant and reflected great credit upon its author and those supporting her in its production. The crowd seeing the pageant and parade was estimated at fifteen thousand.

When driving "Ade-Way" in Newton county, do not forget to stop at the sign of the "Open Door Museum and Home of the Round Table Club" located at Goodland, Indiana; and while visiting this museum do not miss hearing the story of its founding from the lips of the man who has spent thirty-six years in its up-building for the benefit of the boys and girls of Goodland. A. D. Babcock, sole founder and owner, will tell you that several years ago he came to the conclusion that "one could amuse himself at home." Selecting as his source of amusement the gradual development of an historical collection of articles of rare value, he today can boast of having the best collection of historical relics in northwestern Indiana. Mr. Babcock does not confine his efforts to Indiana alone, but has in this collection relics of historical value from Africa, Asia and Europe. Already the museum building is too small. Plans are under way for its enlargement, after which he hopes to invite all of the noted orators of the United States to speak before the Round Table Club and in this way put Goodland, as he says, on the map as a cultural center. Should this project reach the proportions outlined by Mr. Babcock, Newton county will be noted for two national attractions, George Ade, the humorist, and the "Open Door Museum" of Goodland. Mr. Babcock is also the author of a volume of verse, "The Silver Oar."